

A NEARER VIEW OF COUNT LEO TOLSTOI.

BY MRS. ELIZABETH E. EVANS.

WHEN Frau Anna Seuron, formerly governess and trusted companion in the family of Count Leo Tolstoi, was requested by a German publisher to furnish details respecting the character and habits of the Russian Reformer, for the edification of the German reading public, she, duly mindful of the moral laws of hospitality, submitted the proposition to Count Tolstoi for decision. He told her to write about him as freely as she chose: he was sure that she would fulfil the task in a proper manner. Her condensed sketch of a daily and hourly observation of Tolstoi's walk and conversation for years is worth volumes of notes by interviewers and newsmongers of various types who intrude upon the famous recluse in order to secure instantaneous views of his life and surroundings.

Tolstoi is a born romancer, whose motto may well be: "Through Night to Light," since he, from his earliest years, was phenomenally conscious of the moral degradation around him and phenomenally eager to invoke the illumination of truth. His apparently autobiographical narrative, *Childhood*, is largely imaginative, as he was left an orphan at a very early age and never experienced the parental tenderness which he so feelingly describes.

Always thoughtful, in love for the first time when scarcely twelve years old, not remarkable for scholarship at the university, partaking of the follies of student life and the wild excesses of military experience, spending a few years of careless independence as a gay young bachelor upon his ancestral estates and finally saved by his marriage from a further waste of time and strength in the pursuit of pleasure—such was Count Tolstoi's preliminary equipment for a comprehension of the end and aim of human existence, such the brilliant and varied stock of reminiscences from which he was to draw his realistic portrayal of contemporary life

and evolve warnings and advice for the benefit of men and women of like passions with himself in Russia, and in the rest of the world. His talent as a writer developed early. In his eleventh year he composed a little poem which caused an aged friend of the family to prophesy that he would one day become an author, and his first public attempt was made when he was only twenty years old. He was then an ensign in the army, engaged in active service against the Tartars in the Caucasus. One night, as he lay half asleep, while his comrades were playing cards beside him, somebody picked up a newspaper and read aloud: "A little work, signed 'L. T.,' has just appeared, and is making a sensation in the literary world."

So he awoke to fame, and decided to devote himself to literature; but he made no sign, and his companions went to rest without suspecting that the "L. T." of the newspaper was close beside them.

From that time he began to realise his mission as a thinker and writer; although his earnest moods alternated with periods of reckless gaiety as before. His marriage steadied him. His wife was not noble by birth, and his choice seems to have been dictated solely by inclination. She was very young when he married her; scarcely more than a child herself when their first child was born, and the brood increased rapidly until it numbered eleven. The pair lived for nineteen years in retirement upon their estate, he busy with his intellectual creations, and employing his leisure hours in hunting, and in attending to the prosperity of his flocks and herds and fruitful fields, she fully occupied with the care of her increasing family and the government of her necessarily large household. The union appears to have been a fortunate one, to judge from the character of the writings which date from this period, especially in their delineations of feminine character, and of masculine devotion to woman as wife and mother. In the words of his biographer: "the dream of his first love, the remembrance of the temporary alliances which had amused his bachelor freedom, were thrown into an urn and burned to ashes," and she says elsewhere more plainly that he was true to his wife—testimony which implies high praise to both parties, especially in view of the prevailing habits of the upper classes in Russia.

As Tolstoi's artistic power developed and his philanthropic desires embraced an ever widening field of activity, his zeal for his local and personal interests diminished and, consequently, his affairs began to suffer loss. Agents and overseers and laboring

peasants took advantage of his indifference, enriching themselves at his expense, and the estate upon which he lived, as well as two other valuable farms, brought him only a small part of their profits. His increasing absorption in abstract ideas, to the exclusion of practical effort, was perceptible also in the condition of the villagers and peasants of his neighborhood. For a time he was deeply interested in the mental improvement of his dependents, and a school was opened in which members of his family gave regular lessons; also, an A. B. C. book for the people was prepared and published; but the proceeds were small, and the whole enterprise was allowed to dwindle and fall into disuse.

In the meantime the children of the family were growing up, and notwithstanding the presence of governesses and tutors, there was a lack in the system of education which only the advantages of a large city could supply. So the Countess insisted upon a winter residence in Moscow, and the Count finally agreed to the plan; although he would have preferred remaining all the year round in the country. A handsome house with a large garden was bought at a reasonable price, and thenceforth the family migrated to and from the city, according to the seasons.

It was at the winter home in Moscow that Frau Seuron first met Tolstoi and his household. She was not impressed by his gray flannel blouse; to her it looked arrogant, rather than modest; but the firm grasp of his powerful hand inspired confidence, while the keen glance of his small gray eyes showed that she had to deal with an uncommon character. She says that then, and often afterwards, his manner of scrutinising people reminded her of a photographic apparatus, and his writings suggested the same instrument; because only one person, or one idea, held the focus in his mental processes, and hence the power of the picture.

Admitted to the intimacy of the home circle, Tolstoi's words and deeds became the daily study of the observant governess, whose character was sufficiently independent to judge the Reformer's conduct upon its own merits and demerits. Her narrative divested of its fantastic setting and subjected to chronological order and to condensation of form, displays various salient aspects of Tolstoi's character which constitute a sufficient explanation of his course.

He is first and above all a man of moods; not because he is intentionally capricious; but because he has a mind which is continually growing, and growth implies change. Moreover, he had much to unlearn, as well as much to learn, in the thorough revolu-

tion of his habits and aims. The fault of his disciples is in mistaking his tentative theories for fixed principles, his crude suggestions for assured improvements. Frau Seuron, amazed by the contrast between precept and practice, declares that the whole movement is confusion, mystical dogma, disease, out of which, in the course of time, some valuable pearl of truth may be developed ; but not in this century.

It is greatly to Tolstoi's credit that, in spite of his faults and inconsistencies, this unprejudiced and severe critic admired and revered him and was able to retain her faith in his entire honesty of purpose. His conduct was sometimes exasperating ; but sincerity and earnestness were undeniably the basis of his character.

When alone with his family, he was sometimes a charming companion, gay, witty, laughing heartily at his own jokes, and delighting the children with stories of his own early adventures, or with fables composed on the spur of the moment for their sole edification. But there was dignity in his mirth, and he never appeared ridiculous, not even when in a hilarious mood he waltzed around the room in his flannel blouse, with his stocking showing through a hole in his shoe. Sometimes he was gloomy, unapproachable, cross from toothache, or depressed by the woes of the world outside. Much of his time was spent in the solitude of his plainly furnished study on the upper floor, where he wrote his books, and did not allow of any interruption or disturbance until his hours of work were over.

Frau Seuron joined the family in 1882, or thereabouts, and the connection lasted six years. Count Tolstoi was already famous as a writer of romances, and his ideas for the reformation of society were rapidly gaining ground ; especially among the young men of his own class who were dissatisfied with the existing state of things and eager to discover some remedy for long-standing evils. He was frequently consulted by letter, and also by personal application. He neglected his correspondence. Letters were scarcely opened, rarely answered ; they fell on the floor, were hidden under the dishes, carried off by the children. Polite overtures of acquaintance from distinguished scholars and literary celebrities were thrown aside and forgotten ; communications from sympathetic critics, who were doing their utmost to awaken the world to a knowledge of and belief in his greatness, met with the same fate ; the dreamer preferred to dream on undisturbed.

So with regard to the personal applicants. Persistent guests were smuggled into his presence when a favorable mood was upon

him, and seekers after truth were sometimes allowed to steal away from the gay hospitality below stairs to enjoy an earnest interview with the philosopher in the quiet of his upper chamber. That same retreat was his impregnable fortress when visitors were unwelcome. It is no wonder that his celebrity was often distasteful to him; for every summer his quiet country home was besieged by an army of strangers, coming in carriages and on horseback and on foot, each discontented mortal desiring to lay down his burden of satiety, or doubt, or remorse, and hoping to go away relieved and comforted. And Tolstoi listened to the complaints of the weary and heavy-laden and gave advice in keeping with the degree of illumination to which he had himself attained.

But not all who came went away satisfied. Among the seekers were curious and enthusiastic persons who were minded to put his theories into practice, and therefore considered it wise to obtain counsel and suggestion from his own life, and such as these were bewildered and discouraged by what they saw and heard. They expected to find an ascetic, denying himself the good things of which so many of his fellow-men are deprived, spending his time in humble work and hermit-like meditation,—and instead they found a luxurious home, a generous table, servants, equipages, in short, the usual surroundings of a wealthy and titled landed proprietor.

One of these inquirers, rich, noble, and an improvement upon the “young man” of the Gospel story, in that he was ready and willing to give up his “great possessions” for the common good, came in all humility to obtain advice from the wise teacher, believing fully all the stories he had heard about the man who had succeeded in restoring the patriarchal simplicity of life in the early Bible days, and expecting to see the Reformer sitting, like Abraham, in the door of his tent to welcome strangers. Accordingly, the traveller, attired with studious plainness, and carrying his travelling-bag on his arm, arrived at the gate, and avoiding the stately avenue leading to the mansion, wandered about the premises in the hope of finding a less conspicuous entrance. Once inside, he found comfortable rooms, a lively family circle, an elaborate dinner, with ice for dessert,, ladies in fashionable attire, a social evening in the drawing-room, with piano-forte playing and singing, and the Count in his famous blouse evidently at home amidst these luxuries and apparently feeling no desire to discuss the burning questions which filled the visitor’s mind. When the time came for retiring, the stranger was escorted to a chamber in

an adjoining cottage, furnished with only a hard bed, a table, a chair, and a wash-basin. Here, at last, was the simplicity he had expected to find; these surroundings harmonised with Tolstoi's command: "Renounce all the luxuries of life; take with thee only what is necessary, and go thy way in temperance and chastity." So he lay down on his narrow couch and fell asleep. But the night was long, and waking up in the bright moonlight, he opened a door in the wall close beside his bed, and there was a room fitted up with all the comforts and elegancies which he had been so glad to miss in the guest-chamber, and again he was discouraged. What did it matter if Tolstoi wore a blouse, and made his own shoes and drove a plough, when he had only to return home to find himself surrounded by all that makes life enjoyed by the rich and envied by the poor? So the young man arose with the dawn and packed his travelling-bag and departed, unseen by the still sleeping family, and went back to relate his experiences and deter his fellow-converts from a journey to the source of so much printed wisdom.

Also a young nobleman (son of a general high in favor with the Czar), rich, handsome, dissipated, became a convert to Tolstoi's creed and, suddenly turning his back upon all his advantages, went about in old clothes and worn-out shoes, selling tracts at the street-corners. He could not carry out his ideas in the family palace at St. Petersburg, because his widowed mother was mistress there, and she did not believe in Tolstoi; so he contented himself with filling his own water-pitcher, carrying it past the long lines of idle and obsequious servants in the hall, and feeling that he was doing God service in waiting upon himself. At his country-seat he had a better chance to develop his plans, and his endeavors showed an improvement upon the master's example. He introduced enlightened methods of husbandry; he provided for helpless orphans; he established schools and put them under the charge of teachers of his own way of thinking. He wanted to marry Tolstoi's eldest daughter; but her father dissuaded him from that idea, and finally he married one of the teachers in his schools, to whom he took a fancy, because one morning she came into his room before he was up, to get a book, and crossed the chamber and went to the book-shelves and hunted up the book and left the room, without so much as a glance at the occupant of the bed. Her modesty and independence pleased him so greatly that he made her his wife, and although the union was at first disapproved of by his aristocratic relatives, the event proved that he had chosen wisely. Her good sense restrained his fanaticism; children came

to strengthen the bond, and he gradually settled down to the conviction that riches are not necessarily a bar to happiness, nor a hindrance to self-improvement.

Other cases made more serious trouble. Once the Countess, while on a journey, met a lady of her own class who confided to her the anxiety from which she was suffering on account of the conduct of her son who, in conformity with Tolstoi's precepts, was giving away his property right and left, and would soon have nothing remaining for his own support. The Countess told her who she was, and the lady begged her to influence her husband to put a stop to the young man's folly. But Tolstoi only laughed when he heard the story.

Many young noblemen deserted their rightful places in society and married peasant women, or lived with them unmarried, descending to their level and finally drinking themselves to death. Others, more earnest, devoted themselves so ardently to menial work, for which they were not fitted, that they lost health and strength and perished by the way.

Nor was it alone the masculine aristocrats who were affected by the new mania. Many women sought in Tolstoi's doctrine relief from the emptiness of a life of pleasure, and it was no unusual sight to see nobly-born and delicately bred ladies going out in the early morning, attired in white negligé jackets and short skirts, to fill dung-carts and spread manure upon the dewy fields. In short, there were abundant instances of the various degrees of failure and disaster which would inevitably result from the untimely application, by inexperienced and incompetent persons, of crude theories to inconsistent practice.

It is easy to imagine the horror with which Tolstoi's doctrines were regarded by the members of aristocratic families who by this means had lost promising sons and brothers, or been socially disgraced by the eccentric behavior of sisters and daughters. Once a Prince, occupying an influential position at Court, wished to employ Frau Seuron's son as a tutor for his boys; but when he learned that the young man had lived several years in Tolstoi's house, he broke off the negotiations immediately.

This attitude on the part of the higher classes is not surprising, and many of their objections are well-founded; but in spite of the absurdity of some of Tolstoi's notions and the frequent inconsistency of his conduct, there is no doubt that he was from the beginning sympathetic towards his suffering fellow-men and sincere in his desire to abate the evils of society. "What to do?" "How

to begin?" was the cry of his secret thoughts, as well as of his published appeals. No doubt he suffered real agony of spirit as he sat alone and motionless, with bowed head and folded hands, in his favorite seat on the wall of his vast domain, brooding over the wrongs of the poor and the selfishness of the rich.

In Moscow he spent many an evening at the Fair, which is held three times a year in the open common near his city home. There, disguised in his sheepskin mantle, he wandered amidst the crowd and watched the sports and listened to the talk and stood before the gaudy theatre while the play went on, sometimes bringing back a hungry actor to supper, and finding full reward for his charity in the revelations of his grateful guest. What he saw and heard in such contact with the lowest classes of his countrymen filled him with a noble desire to better their condition, and in this spirit many of his sketches and short stories were written. One of these (*The Distillery*), was intended for the stage, as a warning against the prevailing intemperance. It was really acted at the Fair, and report said that the Count was one of the actors. However that may be, his endeavor to have the piece arranged in permanent form came to naught, in consequence of the exorbitant demands of the *impresario*. It was afterwards partially incorporated as an opera, in which form it still survives.

But Tolstoi's experience in this matter, and in other efforts to help the world in his own way, were such as to dishearten and repel him. He brooded more than ever over the evils of life; but he withdrew more and more from personal relations with his fellow-men. For a time he visited the dwellings of the very poor, the lodgings of outcasts, the haunts of vice and crime, and went back to his comfortable home heartsick and appalled. It seemed to him that the only way to help was by example, and he resolved to begin by acts so small that everybody could do likewise, and so, by united effort, the overwhelming burdens which have so long crushed humanity might be lifted and thrown off. Accordingly, day after day he bound a girdle about his loins and drew a barrel of water on a sled, from a fountain at the end of the garden to the kitchen door, and once, when the springs gave out, all Moscow might have seen the Count, dressed like a common laborer, going with the other water-carriers through the streets to fill his cask at the river side. In doing this menial work, when there were servants enough at hand to do it, Tolstoi undoubtedly wished to display his sincere humility and true brotherly love. It was not a Russian nobleman masquerading for notoriety or fame; it was a favored human being

willing to ignore the distinctions of his class and to fulfil the divine command: "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread."

All honor to his courage and his humanity; even though the impulse was fleeting and the exhibition absurd!

The same lack of practical activity and persistent endeavor was still more evident in the condition of his country estate, which was behind the times in useful improvements, even for Russia. Once a hut in the village caught fire, and twenty-one houses were burned to ashes before the flames could be subdued. Such a calamity is common in Russia, upon neglected estates; but in this case the landlord professed to be the father of his people: why then did he not ensure safety by the purchase of a fire-engine? So thought the governess, as she looked on at the destruction of property.

One day she came across an old peasant-woman who was digging potatoes with a stick of wood, and asked her why she did not use a spade instead. The woman said there were only three spades in the whole village. When this state of things was reported to the Count he laughed and said it was all right; the peasants had thereby an opportunity to practice Christian charity in lending their tools! At that time there was in the village only one hammer, which wandered from hand to hand according to necessity, and the Count covered this difficulty with the careless remark that every peasant had an axe!

Near the great house stood a maple tree which had been struck by lightning, and on the only healthy remaining limb hung a bell which was rung for meals, and also to give alarm on other occasions. This was a gathering-place for poor people seeking advice or assistance, and here they often stood for hours, hoping that help would come. It came, generally; but not from the head of the family. The Countess dealt out medicine and lint; other members of the household gave clothing and money; but the Count remained invisible, or passed through the waiting group unrecognised, with a scythe over his shoulder, or an axe in his belt. His earlier endeavor to benefit the peasants of his estate had made a noise in the world and the public had never been informed that the project was only transitory.

One day two philanthropic strangers arrived to visit the school which had once really existed, and the hospital which was entirely a work of imagination. When they saw the tumble-down hut which had served as a schoolhouse, and failed to find any trace of

a hospital, they turned about and went their way, without even seeking an interview with the famous Reformer.

Tolstoi, the Rousseau of the nineteenth century, believed in nature and he hated the luxuries of civilisation in any form. Above all money was to him odious. He loathed both to receive as well as to pay out money. His charity toward others was an indulgence in personal gifts or services, but as soon as money was either needed or demanded his warmhearted sympathy was shriveled into cold indifference, which made him callous and even unjust.

An estate of his, the most distant one of all, had long been suffering under the mismanagement of a selfish overseer and dishonest peasants, until at last the evil became too enormous even for the patience of the Count, who was then at the height of his hatred of money, and of everything that money represents. Just here Frau Seuron came to the rescue by introducing to the Count a German overseer who had long been in charge of an important estate in another part of Russia and who was furnished with abundant testimonials as to his competency and honesty. He came three times to Moscow from his temporary abode more than fifteen miles away, to confer with the Count, who treated him as though the engagement were certain; although he avoided the mention of money matters. At last a final interview was appointed, and the man arrived punctually, leaving his wife and children at the hotel, he having given up his previous situation to another overseer, in the expectation of starting immediately with his family for his new home. But after everything had been satisfactorily arranged, the new overseer asked with becoming modesty for an advance of one hundred and fifty roubles (a little over one hundred dollars), to pay the expenses of the journey and of the first month's occupation; whereupon the Count gave him a look, expressive of the enmity which he sometimes seemed to feel towards his fellow-men, and left the room by the little door leading to his sanctum, where he was sure of being undisturbed. The poor overseer, whose plans were thus suddenly overturned, exclaimed: "God will provide; but the Count is on the wrong road to honor!" When the Count came down to dinner that day, he said to Frau Seuron: "I don't know how to explain to you my conduct this morning"—and she answered him only by a sarcastic smile. Afterwards he explained his action to others by saying that the man had made himself suspicious by asking for money: other overseers had known how to help themselves, and this one ought to be able to do it too. But he forgot that those other overseers had ruined his

affairs, so that out of a herd of sixty camels only two remained, and instead of an income of ten thousand roubles, he received no money at all from the estate. It was two years before that man could secure a situation for the support of his family. As for the Count, he confided the estate to a succession of untrustworthy overseers, and things went from bad to worse, the only safeguard against total ruin being the inexhaustible richness of the land.

In those days a stranger came to see Tolstoi and to offer him his immense fortune for benevolent purposes. The man was of a high family; but he had married a plain governess and was not happy in his marriage and wished to use his life to some purpose in assisting other people. Just at that time a wealthy friend of Frau Seuron wished to sell a valuable forest, and she offered Frau Seuron ten thousand roubles if she would find a purchaser for the land. So Frau Seuron, to whom the generous sum would have been a welcome assistance in the support of herself and her son, asked Count Tolstoi to mention the matter to his visitor. But the Count laughed, and said: "Are you trying to make money?" and did not say a word to the man who was so anxious to get rid of his fortune for the good of other people. And so the opportunity was lost.

One day Count Tolstoi came home deeply affected by a pitiful case of poverty which he had discovered during his walk. He had met a boy about fifteen years old who had only one arm and who was crying with cold. He went with the boy to see where he lived and was taken into a lodging-house where six persons occupied one room. The boy's mother was there, old and sick. The Count took the boy home with him and told his son Leo to look among his old shoes and bring a pair for the stranger. The shoes came; but they were thin and full of holes and too small for the boy's feet. Frau Seuron remarked that such a gift was not worth having, and the Count replied that he had told the boy to come again and he would give him fifty kopeks (about thirty-two cents), to pay for the lodging, as the landlord had threatened to turn mother and son into the street. The woman came instead of the boy, and the shoes were given to her; Frau Seuron also gave her a shawl; but the Count said the boy must come himself for the money. So the boy came, wearing the shoes, which evidently hurt his feet at every step he took. The Count was passing through the room to go to his study; he stopped, and put his hand into his pocket, as though searching for the promised coins. Just then a friend came to visit him. The Count bade him welcome in a joyful voice, and together they disappeared through the little door leading to the study.

Nothing more was said about the money. Frau Seuron gave the boy what she could spare, and he went away and never came back again. He died not long afterwards of consumption, in the hospital, as Frau Seuron learned from his mother, whom she met accidentally in the street.

Frau Seuron explains such contradictions in the conduct of Count Tolstoi, by declaring that so lofty a character must have its depths and precipices also. His sudden changes of temper and will were due in part to physical causes. He was thoroughly good only when he was perfectly well, and he was often a sufferer, especially from toothache, to which he was a martyr until every tooth was out of his head; for he had no faith in dentistry, and preferred to let nature take its course in the process of destruction. His unreasonable hatred of money, however, had something to do with his aversion to giving it, and his theory of mutual helpfulness seemed to him to lose its beauty as soon as one party demanded, and the other bestowed, alms. He could work with his peasants and talk with them as man to man; but if they jarred upon his sensibilities by asking inopportunely for help, his manner changed, he showed himself the despotic nobleman of ancient race dealing with immemorial serfdom, and the disappointed laborers shook their heads and retired in silent defeat.

The Count's contempt for civilisation went so far as to make him obtuse to the æsthetical and even hygienic needs of cleanliness.

There was a time when Count Tolstoi, formerly an elegant man of the world, neglected entirely the care of his person and appeared to revel in the degrading filth and disgusting odors which belong to the lowest department of farm labor. He would come to the table after hours of hard work at the dung-heap, his clothes reeking with the stench, and smile pityingly upon those of his family who were disturbed by the impure atmosphere. Sometimes he would discard stockings and wrap up his feet in linen rags, after the manner of the peasants, and wear the rags until they were a horror to all who came near him. His pocket handkerchief is characterised as "indescribable," and his way of using it and of putting it into his pocket, showed that he himself was disgusted and wished to touch it as little as possible. It seemed as though he were trying experiments with himself, to see what comforts are really necessary to existence, and what can be renounced.

His familiarity with dirt appeared to affect his moral standards as well. There were long discussions as to what is and is not

dirty; amongst other things, he gravely asserted, before a table full of young people, his own children and their guests, that to set apart a place for certain necessary offices of the human body is to encourage immoral luxury. Such perfectly natural acts should be performed without shame wherever and whenever nature dictates, as quietly and modestly as possible, of course, but without any long seeking after a secluded place to hide in. The Countess and the governess protested against such unsavory table-talk; but the children went into fits of laughter at the Count's droll ideas. Soon afterwards Frau Seuron saw one of these young people, a stately, elegantly-dressed boy, only ten years old, putting theory into practice in the avenue before the house, and when she, later, called him to account for the indecency, he answered, with the candor of good faith: "The Count says we mustn't make too much fuss over such matters!"

The governess was generous enough to perceive, in these and many other idiosyncrasies, an honest striving after some sound principle, a humane effort to solve some problem containing an element of good for the whole species; but she owns that filthy clothes and filthy habits are not in themselves sufficient to make a man famous, and it is no wonder that when such stories were repeated by less sympathetic listeners, the world in general set Tolstoi down as a lunatic, or, at least, a "crank."

His moods were strongly contrasted. If at one time he could endure without discomfort the stench of the dung-heap, at another he took delight in the subtle odors of French perfumery, and in the more delicate fragrance of natural flowers.

Frau Seuron says there are two Tolstois; one, the author, the farmer, the shoemaker, the nobleman, the head of the family; the other, himself. Sometimes he shows one characteristic, sometimes another; for he has the gift of being able to peel himself off in layers, like an onion. When he is really himself he acts with primitive simplicity, exactly as though he were alone, giving no heed to the presence of other people. His renown is often oppressive to him; such publicity is contrary to his inmost feelings and tastes.

He was always careless about his appearance, even in the city. His hats and caps had neither shape nor color, and he was quite indifferent as to whether they were suitable or becoming. Only his blouse must be long, as he considered it more chaste to wear it in that form. Closely-fitting trousers he did not approve of; he objected also to low-necked dresses for women. Like many another sensitive human being, he was often oppressed by the ap-

parent cruelty and injustice of killing animals for food, and once he made trial of the vegetarian system. For more than a year he followed the rule, yielding only now and then so far as to partake of bouillon. His health suffered from the change, and he was persuaded to include poultry in his bill of fare. Often, too, the roast beef from which the family had been served at supper was found to have been well eaten into during the night, and the Count was suspected of being the eater, although he never would acknowledge the deed.

This plan of living soon lost its force, and the Count returned gladly to the fleshpots, as many another vegetarian has been forced to do, by reason of well grounded fears of a permanent loss of vitality. A few years later he made another attempt. A Russian exile, who had lived a long time in America came to see him. The man was fifty years old, but looked much younger, and he ascribed his blooming appearance to his diet. For ten years he had lived on vegetables, and had eaten all his food without salt.

Not only the Count, but also the daughters of the house resolved to try this way of keeping young and beautiful; but in less than a year the girls grew thin and pale, and the whole company of converts went back to their former mode of living. Also, the Count tried once to give up tobacco. "Smoking is unhealthy," he said, "it is a luxury. The fields given up to the weed might better be planted with grain to feed the hungry." So cigars and cigarettes were laid aside, and the Count wandered up and down forlorn. But, finding that his health suffered from the abstinence, he resumed the habit and was comforted.

His biographer remarks in this connection that those who imagine the Count to be an ascetic are greatly mistaken. His physical and psychical characteristics are not those out of which a saint is made, and his seasons of self-mortification were irregular and few. It seemed to her that his whimsical industries, such as lighting his own fire, blacking his own boots, working as a shoemaker, digging in the field, driving the plough, carting manure, were so many ways of refreshing his mental energy through bodily exercise. He gave up riding after being obliged to sell his favorite horse; he gave up hunting after adopting vegetarian principles—he says too that he dared not go out alone with a gun, for fear that he should be tempted to shoot himself,—and so he turned to more plebeian methods of letting off steam, so to speak, for the health and safety of his spiritual as well as physical nature.

His dread of death was very strong. Once, a friend of his, a

spiritist, said that when he came to die, he should send for him, to let him see that dying is not hard. Three days afterwards the man lay on his death-bed, from the effects of a sudden cold, and he sent for Tolstoi; but the Count would not go, until after his friend was dead. He was naturally inclined to be superstitious, and this habit of mind, together with a lack of thorough education, interfered with the ability to form just conclusions respecting the social problems which he was trying to solve.

He never showed any desire that his children should be learned; on the contrary, he often expressed himself as opposed to study, and yet he seemed to expect that his children should understand everything. Their education was the work of their teachers and governesses; the family life was characterised by great individual liberty; each member came and went as inclination dictated, and the Count troubled himself least of all with the management of domestic affairs.

Meantime, the family was increasing in numbers and years and expenses, while the income was growing less with every season of mismanagement and neglect. Just here came in the practical energy of the mistress of the house. She undertook to gain pecuniary profit out of her husband's literary work. He rebelled at first against the plan; his theory being that money is an evil and the cause of evil; but his wife persisted: the children must be educated and provided for, and their own old age secured from want.

So the Countess, assisted by a lady friend (apparently the governess herself), addressed herself to the undertaking, and carried it out with praiseworthy resolution. The Count had to shut his eyes to what was going on, although he, as much as any other member of the family, was to profit by this reward of his intellectual labor. True, the transaction was in direct contradiction to Tolstoi's preaching; but the fault lay in his eccentric ideas, not in his wife's practical administration of affairs. The fact was that their property was going to ruin; while a perfectly legitimate and honorable source of wealth was neglected, because of an absurd scruple, and, like the sensible wife and prudent mother that she was, she demanded that a just share of the profits of her husband's work should be given to him, instead of going, as formerly, into the pockets of publishers and booksellers.

The Countess was in no degree responsible for the decrease of prosperity which made this action necessary. The failure of the estates were due to the Count's indifference and lack of authority:

whatever she controlled was secure and successful. Her family name was Behrs, and her grandparents were descended from Jews. Her ancestry asserted itself in her talent for business, and while the rest of the family spent and enjoyed without anxiety or calculation, she kept affairs in order and looked well to the ways of her household, according to the precepts of the Sage of Israel. It is the custom, more or less everywhere, and especially in Russia, to ridicule and despise the peculiar characteristics of the Jews, instead of recognising the noble qualities which constitute the true secret of the persistent prosperity of that race, in spite of the persecutions under which they continually labor. So Tolstoi could sarcastically remark that if he had been a professional performer on the clarinet, his wife would have spent her life in polishing the keys of his instrument. He might have added that but for her industry and thrift he would not have had money to buy a clarinet!

During the winter which followed the beginning of this enterprise the Count took especial pains to wear old clothes, going about in the streets of Moscow, and even paying visits in aristocratic houses, clad like a peasant, in a sheepskin jacket and a sheepskin cap, wearing high leather boots, and with his hands stuck into his pockets, or shoved into the sleeves of his jacket. In such a costume he went once to the Institute where Frau Seuron's son was a pupil, in order to escort the boy to his mother, who was ill. She, fearing some mistake, telegraphed to her son that the Count would arrive at a certain hour, and accordingly, the Director and the whole corps of teachers waited at the main entrance to receive the distinguished guest. But nobody came, excepting an old man in a sheepskin jacket, who was told to sit down on a bench in the hall, among the other people who had come on business. So he sat there, while the teachers passed up and down, wondering why the Count did not appear.

Not until after young Seuron approached the stranger and exchanged greetings with him in French, and offered his arm as they went out together, did it dawn upon the minds of the Faculty and attendants that the bearded man in sheepskin was Tolstoi himself! Great was the excitement in school, and soon the whole town was talking about the episode, while the Count added the story to several other similar incidents for the amusement of the home circle, deducing the conclusion that rank is not written on the face. "No, but on the back!" was Frau Seuron's playful rejoinder, by way of a hit at Tolstoi's peasant costume.

Frau Seuron gives due credit to Tolstoi for his exertions dur-

ing the year of famine. She says that of all the systems devised for the relief of the starving multitudes, his was the most practical and the most effective. The whole family were actively engaged in the work of mercy, and the executive talent of the Countess did much to make the enterprise a success. Besides, they had more means to work with than had the other societies; for Tolstoi's reputation as an author and a Reformer moved benevolent souls in all parts of the world to send contributions directly to him. His conduct in that emergency showed that with all his vagaries he possessed a fund of good common sense, and the same trait was displayed when, after his investigations among the poor of Moscow, he perceived and acknowledged that poverty cannot be permanently relieved by almsgiving; for the causes of poverty must be removed, in order to render a healthy prosperity possible.

A few years ago the principal comic paper in St. Petersburg published a caricature of Tolstoi letting fall a drop of ink from his pen into a barrel of tar. The drop of ink was labelled "Philosophy."

Tolstoi, Frau Seuron goes on to say, is by no means a thorough philosopher; but like most persons of good natural powers, his views are continually modified, according to increasing experience. He possesses a many-sided, but not a highly-cultivated, mind; hence his conclusions are necessarily empirical and not always borne out by facts.

Philosophy is the cradle of Renunciation, and people should not complain because Tolstoi has lain down in it so late. There is no such thing as a young philosopher: what in youth is capacity becomes virtue only with the progress of time.

This unsparing and yet eulogistic biographer trusts to time for the gradual removal of the faults and inconsistencies, whether in-born or acquired, which hinder the Reformer's individual progress and public success. She prophesies that his doctrines may cause strife and confusion for a century, and then the truth that is in them will be accepted in peace. "*Be sincere and honest and loving,*" is the sum and substance of his teaching, and that is wisdom which will endure.

Yes: it will endure; but that wisdom did not originate with Tolstoi, nor with any other reformer and leader of the race. It is as old as mankind; it is the lesson which age and experience teaches to every human being who lives and loves and suffers; the message has never come as news to any people; it answers to the best instincts of every living soul.

Tolstoi's religion is the creed of the New Testament, divested, as he imagines, of the superstitions and complications with which an ecclesiastical hierarchy has gradually encumbered it. But every form of belief which draws its inspiration from a supernatural source crystallises, sooner or later, into a Church, and requires external forms to gratify internal emotions. Tolstoi shows in all his writings that he is working in a circle—the same circle which has always bounded the religious impulses of mankind.

His attempts to apply his theories to the actual condition of human affairs prove his inability to effect a radical improvement of the social system. According to him, every man must help himself, and thereby help his brother: therefore every man must provide for his own wants with his own hands. And as such a plan is impracticable under the division of labor which obtains in large communities, people ought to go away from cities and distribute themselves over the face of the earth in companies so small that each member may have oversight of all the other members and be ready to give assistance when required. Such an arrangement would put a stop to the accumulation of capital and the oppressions of labor, besides doing away with the source of all these evils—money. The proposal of so entire a change in the prevailing modes of living suggests a decline of the degree of civilisation to which the race has at present attained, and the question naturally arises: What is to become of our industries and arts and sciences, if we need only a sheepskin for clothing and bed; if we are to live in communities so small as to forbid the accumulation of incentives to high achievement; if talent and genius are to be denied development, because of the pressure of daily needs and the necessity of the universal expenditure of time and strength in ignoble work?

Tolstoi does not deny the progress of the race in arts and sciences; but he asks whether the great mass of the people have been made better or happier thereby, implying that they have not: he asks whether such want and misery as now exist were ever known before, evidently expecting a negative reply.

If he would read history more thoroughly he would be forced to acknowledge that bad as things are in our day, they were much worse formerly. Disease was more prevalent and more fatal when water-closets, which Tolstoi denounces as “an immoral luxury,” were unknown, and the people, living in small communities, made of their villages such heaps of filth that frequent migration was necessary for health and comfort. The spread of commerce through the application of steam as a motive power, has done more to

further the brotherhood of man than missionaries could ever have accomplished: electric light is a greater "preventive of crime than all the sermons of all the Churches, and the oppressive burdens of the working classes will be lifted the sooner for the education which enables the laborer to recognise his wrongs and demand his rights.

Again, Tolstoi declares that war is an evil which ought to be abolished, and as nations do not seem disposed to ensure peace, it remains only for individuals to make war impossible by refusing to fight. If it be objected that citizens or subjects who enjoy the protection of a national government ought to be ready to defend that government if attacked, the answer is that the man must not accept any favors from the government and then he will be free to decline serving in time of trouble. The absurdity of these propositions is evident. No person living under a government can avoid being benefited by its protection. If his house catches fire and he refuses to notify the fire department, the firemen will come with their engines in spite of him, to save his property and that of his neighbors. He can neither live nor die unto himself as a member of society, and membership implies duties. At this very moment the world is ringing with Tolstoi's complaints, because of the cruel punishment inflicted upon certain Russian subjects who, in conformity with his precepts, have refused to become soldiers.

Tolstoi's principle that war ought to be abolished is entirely right; but his way of putting an end to it would increase the evil a thousandfold. If the Germans were to refuse to perform military duty, it would not be many hours before the French would cross the Rhine and set all Europe in a flame of war. If there should be a general defection in the Russian army, even that immense empire would not be safe a day from the inroads of covetous neighbors. With the increase of knowledge comes a growing disinclination to settle disputes by violence; already civilised governments counsel arbitration instead of arms; doubtless the time will come when the nations will not learn war any more; but at present the chief safe-guards of international amity are the increasing deadliness of military weapons, and the interdependence of alien peoples in commercial affairs.

Everything that exists is evolved, not made: Tolstoi does not recognise this axiom; hence his endeavor to hasten the accomplishment of a social perfection, the development of which must necessarily be gradual and slow.